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ARLINGTON REDEVELOPMENT BOARD

Arlington, Massachusetts  
Middlesex, ss

DOCKET NO. 3673

DECISION  
Special Permit Under  
ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN REVIEW

Applicant: 2-14 Medford Street, LLC, 455 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 1, Arlington, MA, 02474

Property Address: 455-457 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, Massachusetts 02474

Hearing Dates: September 27 and October 25, 2021

Date of Decision: October 25, 2021

20 Day Appeal Period Ends: November 29, 2021

Members

Approved

Eugene B. Benson

Rachel Zimmerman

Stephen A. Reuler

Opposed

Town Clerk's Certification

Date



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**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**

**Redevelopment Board**

**730 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, Massachusetts 02476**

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**DECISION OF THE BOARD**

**Environmental Design Review Docket #3673**

**455-457 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, MA 02474**  
**2-14 Medford Street, LLC**

**October 25, 2021**

This Decision applies to Environmental Design Review Special Permit Docket #3673 granted to 2-14 Medford Street, LLC, 455 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 1, Arlington, MA, 02474, to convert a portion of existing ground floor retail to a residential lobby and second floor office spaces to residential units at 455-457 Massachusetts Avenue and adding a second floor to a one-story brick commercial structure at 2-14 Medford Street, consolidating two buildings into one mixed-use building in the B3 Village Business District. The proposed building will be a two-story mixed-use structure; the structure encompasses multiple addresses: 4 Medford Street, 6 Medford Street, 8 Medford Street, 10 Medford Street, 12 Medford Street, 14 Medford Street, 449 Massachusetts Avenue, 451 Massachusetts Avenue, 455 Massachusetts Avenue, 457 Massachusetts Avenue, and 463 Massachusetts Avenue. The 13 residential units are comprised of one (1) studio and 12 one-bedroom rental residential units and will include two (2) deed-restricted affordable rental units per section 8.2 of the Zoning Bylaw. Public hearings were held on September 27, 2021, and October 25, 2021.

Materials submitted for consideration of this application include:

- Application for EDR Special Permit, including an Environmental Impact Statement;
- Site Development Plan Set, prepared by Allen & Major Associates, Inc. dated August 20, 2021;
- Architectural Drawing Set, including floor plans, elevations, and renderings, prepared by Market Square Architects, dated July 27, 2021;
- Description of project construction process by project estimated, no date;
- Mixed-Use Redevelopment Drainage Summary prepared by Allen & Major Associates, dated August 20, 2021; and
- LEED Checklist.
- Architectural and site plan sets, including elevations, schematics, renderings, and signage dated October 19, 2021
- A document responding to the Redevelopment Board's requests during the prior hearing.

The following criteria have been met, per Section 3.3.3, Arlington Zoning Bylaw:

1. Mixed-use is allowed by Special Permit in the B3 Village Business District. The Zoning Bylaw, in Section 5.5.1.D, indicates that the district's predominant uses include retail, service, and office establishments catering to both convenience and comparison-good shoppers and oriented to pedestrian traffic. Mixed-use buildings are allowed and encouraged, including in the principal business area at Medford Street and Massachusetts Avenue. Mixed-use is a combination of two or more distinct land uses, such as those proposed by this applicant, and the definition encourages such uses to be in a single, multi-story structure.
2. The requested use is essential and desirable and advances the Arlington Master Plan and Housing Production Plan goals and strategies.
3. The development will include 16 surface parking spaces for cars, including one (1) ADA accessible van parking space and thirty-four (34) short- and long-term parking spaces for bicycles, 26 long-term indoor spaces and 8 short-term outdoor spaces.
4. The development will meet stormwater design standards, including the installation of pervious paver systems, an underground filtration system, and a landscaped buffer will be introduced to a previously completely impervious site. Overall, there will be a reduction of impervious area and quantity of stormwater flowing from the site. The development will improve, not overload, public utilities.
5. The development will need to meet the Arlington Zoning Bylaw Special Regulation 8.2 which outline affordable housing requirements. Two (2) units will be required to be representative of the mix of units in the building and made available to eligible households making up to 70% of the area median income. The units will be equitably dispersed throughout the proposed building.
6. The use does not impair the integrity or character of the neighborhood. The mixed-use building is in keeping with adjacent land uses in Arlington Center. New residential units will not impair the integrity or character of the district, or the two adjoining districts and it will not be detrimental to health or welfare. The building is consistent with the Design Standards for the Town of Arlington.
7. The use will not be in excess or detrimental to the character of the neighborhood.

The following criteria have been met, per Section 3.4.4, Arlington Zoning Bylaw:

**A. EDR-1 Preservation of Landscape**

The existing site condition is primarily impervious. Approximately 2,457 square feet of the site will include a landscaped buffer of perennials, flowering trees, and arborvitae and pervious walkways along the side property line and a landscaped walkway to the lobby. The new landscaping will introduce a buffer from the rear parking lot of the property at 473-475 Massachusetts Ave.

**B. EDR-2 Relation of the Building to the Environment**

The development is in the B3 Village Business District, which constitutes several blocks along Massachusetts Avenue and Broadway in Arlington Center. Building heights in the vicinity range from single-story to 11-stories. The B5 Central Business District, across the street, includes mixed-use and larger residential buildings. There is a range of architectural styles and zoning districts in the vicinity. The ground floor storefronts will largely be preserved, however the transparency of the lobby for the apartment units will be reduced as the existing glass storefront will be reconstructed with three smaller windows. The applicant proposes to remove the awning and restore the concrete detailing above the façade at 455 Massachusetts Avenue storefront; the existing benches along Massachusetts Avenue will be maintained, and flower boxes and awnings will be added along the façade. The second-floor façade maintains a commercial mixed-use appearance and roofline consistent with adjacent structures in the district. The Board granted relief from corner lot setback requirements in 5.3.8 per Section 5.3.16 which would require significant alteration of a façade and moving an existing building back to meet the adjacent church and school building on Medford Street.

**C. EDR-3 Open Space**

The redevelopment will add areas of landscaping to an existing impervious site, including approximately 2,457 square feet of landscaping. The Board granted relief from buffer requirements per Section 5.3.21 which would require a 15-foot landscaped buffer in lieu of required on-site parking. The Board granted relief from usable and landscaped open space requirements per Section 5.5.2 B.

**D. EDR-4 Circulation**

The development includes 16 spaces for vehicles located at-grade at the rear of the property, including one van-accessible HP parking space which is less than the required 42 vehicle parking spaces. At least 15 of those 16 spaces must be reserved for residents of the building. The development also includes 34 indoor and outdoor bicycle parking spaces, more than the required 28 bicycle parking spaces. The Board granted relief from the required number of parking spaces, contingent on the applicant submitting the required Transportation Demand Management Plan per Section 6.1.5 to be reviewed and approved administratively by the Department of Planning and Community Development. The Board also granted relief from the drive aisle dimensions per Section 6.1.11.C(3) from the required 24-foot aisle width to a 20-foot aisle width to accommodate on-site parking.

**E. EDR-5 Surface Water Drainage**

The development will improve stormwater management and surface drainage through installation of pervious pavers and underground filtration system to reduce stormwater runoff. The development is compliant with the Town's stormwater bylaw. 1,008 square feet of presently impervious pavement will be replaced with pervious, landscaped areas.

**F. EDR-6 Utilities Service**

All new utility connections will be provided by existing utility lines adjacent to the property.

**G. EDR-7 Advertising Features**

The Board required a detailed signage template package for Medford Street and Massachusetts Avenue storefronts and individual signage for future building commercial tenants to be reviewed and approved administratively by the Department of Planning and Community Development.

**H. EDR-8 Special Features**

All structures are appropriately set back and include appropriate screening and enclosures of additional structures on the building and in the parking lot.

**I. EDR-9 Safety**

The development meets all relevant health and safety codes.

**J. EDR-10 Heritage**

The proposal will include demolition of the rear of an existing structure on Massachusetts Avenue and on Medford Street to create conditions that will allow for a second building story and rear parking area. The proposed massing and preliminary design for the proposed building are compatible with other uses in the immediate neighborhood. While both structures are part of the Arlington Center Historic District area, only 4-14 Medford Street is a contributing historic structure as identified on the *Inventory of Historically or Architecturally Significant Properties in the Town of Arlington*. Both structures are under the jurisdiction of the Arlington Historical Commission, which will provide final review and approval of building design elements.

**K. EDR-11 Microclimate**

There will be no adverse impacts on air and water resources or on temperature levels of the immediate environment.

**L. EDR-12 Sustainable Building and Site Design**

The redevelopment as proposed generates a score that potentially qualifies for LEED platinum certification.

The Board made the following findings in this Decision:

1. The project is consistent with Environmental Design Review per Section 3.4 of the Zoning Bylaw.
2. The setbacks are appropriate per Section 5.3.16.
3. The site plan is appropriate per Section 5.3.21.
4. The redevelopment will not adversely affect the adjacent R1 zoning districts per Section 5.3.19.
5. The landscaped areas are appropriate per Section 5.5.2 B.
6. The vehicle and bicycle parking improvements justify the parking reduction per Section 6.1.5 subject to a Transportation Demand Management Plan.
7. The usable and landscaped open space plans are appropriate.
8. The driveway aisle is appropriate per Section 6.1.11.C(3).

The redevelopment must adhere to the following general conditions:

1. The final design, façade materials, landscaping, fencing, lighting, and sign plans and relevant specifications shall be subject to the approval of the Arlington Redevelopment Board. Any substantial or material deviation during construction from the approved plans and specifications is subject to the written approval of the Arlington Redevelopment Board.
2. Any substantial or material deviation during construction from the approved plans and specifications is subject to the written approval of the Arlington Redevelopment Board.
3. The Board maintains continuing jurisdiction over this permit and may, after a duly advertised public hearing, attach other conditions, or modify these conditions as it deems appropriate to protect the public interest and welfare.
4. Snow removal from all parts of the site, as well as from any abutting public sidewalks, shall be the responsibility of the owner and shall be accomplished in accordance with Town Bylaws.
5. Trash shall be picked up only on Monday through Friday between the hours of 7:00 am and 6:00 pm. All exterior trash and storage areas on the property, if any, shall be properly screened and maintained in accordance with Town Bylaws.
6. The Owner shall provide a statement from the Town Engineer that all proposed utility services have adequate capacity to serve the development. The owner shall provide evidence to the Department of Planning and Community Development that a final plan for drainage and surface water removal has been reviewed and approved by the Town Engineer.
7. Upon installation of landscaping materials and other site improvements, the owner shall remain responsible for such materials and improvement and shall replace and repair as necessary to remain in compliance with the approved site plan.
8. All utilities serving or traversing the site (including electric, telephone, cable, and other such lines and equipment) shall be underground.
9. Upon the issuance of the building permit the Owner shall file with the Inspectional Services Department and the Police Department the names and telephone numbers of contact personnel who may be reached 24 hours each day during the construction period.

The project must adhere to the following special conditions:

1. The owner shall work with the Department of Planning and Community Development to comply with all requirements of Section 8.2, Affordable Housing Requirements.
2. The affordable units shall be equitably dispersed throughout the building and shall be comparable to market-rate units in terms of location, quality and character, room size, number of rooms, number of bedrooms, and external appearance as approved by the Department of Planning and Community Development.
3. An Affordable Housing Deed Restriction shall be executed with the Town prior to issuance of an Occupancy Permit for the two (2) affordable units.
4. No condominium conversion of said affordable rental units shall be permitted without the express permission of this Board. In the case of a proposed condominium conversion, Applicant shall work with the Department of Planning and Community Development to ensure that the units continue to meet the requirements of Section 8.2.
5. The Owner shall submit a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan for review and approval by the Department of Planning and Community Development.
6. The Owner shall submit a final landscaping and planting plan for review and approval by the Department of Planning and Community Development.
7. The Owner shall submit a final signage template plan for Medford Street and Massachusetts Avenue storefronts for review and approval by the Department of Planning and Community Development.
8. For any change in tenancy, the Owner shall require tenants conform with the approved signage template for storefronts and Section 6.2 of the Zoning Bylaw. Any deviation from those requirements will require tenant applicants to submit an Environmental Design Review Special Permit application for review and approval by the Arlington Redevelopment Board.
9. The Owner shall provide a final plan with required building materials as approved by the Arlington Historical Commission to the Department of Planning and Community Development for approval by the Department. The Owner shall not install PVC at the cornice or trim. The Owner must install wrought iron or similar for railings. The Owner also shall not install board and batten for any exterior surface.
10. The Owner shall not allow wall-mounted mechanical equipment to be installed on the ground-level over or along the alleyway at the rear of the property.

11. The Owner shall demonstrate that at least 50% of the roof shall be ready and provide for solar access.

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